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WILL AXL LET SLASH PLAY WITH GUNS AGAIN?

{page 10}

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Wednesday, April 11, 2012

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THE CUP STAYS HERE

Long postseason journey to back-to-back titles begins now ◐ 2012 Bruins playoff preview {pages 17-19}

Metropolitik

Rick Santorum wilts under Pa. ad assault

◐ Conservative drops out of GOP presidential race ◐ He couldn't win, but 'home state' loss would have stung {page 06}

Into men with low testosterone?

{page 14}

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1

In the news

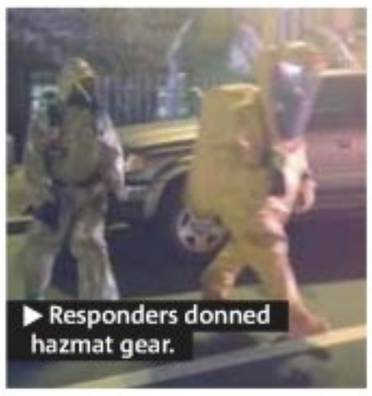
17

Boston is a hot spot for those who wear skinny jeans and listen to music before it's mainstream. According to Travel and Leisure's list of "America's Best Cities for Hipsters," the Hub brings a lot to the square-rimmed glasses wearing table, ranking it at No. 17 out of 22 spots around the U.S. Pointing out the overflow of hipsters from the Cambridge area, the list says the techie crowd around MIT and Cambridge give "a boost to Beantown's hip quotient." METRO

Today's local tweet

"The #mbta has changed their train schedule. I've learned the new times but apparently the trains haven't. #lateagain."

@PLAIDOLIVES, ON THE SHIFTS IN TRAIN TIMES THAT HAVEN'T BEEN WORKING SINCE THEY STARTED THIS MONTH



▶ Responders donned hazmat gear.

BU grad student uses chemical to overdose

BOSTON. A Boston University graduate student killed herself Monday night using a hazardous substance, which prompted a response to her South End apartment by a hazardous materials crew.

Earlier Monday night, Boston police and paramedics responded to a South End apartment for a possible overdose. The woman, whose name was not released, was taken to Boston Medical Center where she later died.

School officials said she worked in a low-risk lab on the Boston University Medical Campus studying the effects of aging on the brain.

The hazardous materials crew responded to the first-floor apartment at 676 Massachusetts Ave. about 11 p.m.

Fire officials said they believe the woman ingested sodium azide, a chemical used in the making of air bags, according to the Globe. It can turn into a type of cyanide.

The substance is found at the school but none has been reported missing, said Maria Ober, a BU spokeswoman. "An initial review in the lab shows nothing missing," she said.

Initial responders were decontaminated at BMC and their vehicles were checked for toxins. METRO/MN

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ Rousseff and Patrick

Bay State welcomes Brazil's president

BOSTON. President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil was welcomed at the State House yesterday. The visit followed Gov. Deval Patrick's trip to South America last year as part of a trade mission. During Rousseff's visit, protesters who had occupied the steps of the State House over MBTA cuts were forced to move across the street to the Boston Common because of security issues. METRO

Fourteen face charges in alleged frat hazing case

BOSTON. Police are seeking complaints against 14 suspects who allegedly engaged in hazing rituals at a house in Allston Monday morning.

Police said the suspects will face hazing, failure to report hazing and assault and battery charges.

Police filed a total of 70 complaints against the suspects, members of the fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi, who allegedly duct-taped five students together in their underwear and doused them in condiments. METRO

Police nab 32 in statewide online kiddie porn sweep

Suspects hail from Boston, suburbs ◐ Thousands of 'horrible' images found during weeklong effort ◐ The arrests are just 'tip of the iceberg'

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ The names and mugshots of the suspects

Police yesterday announced the arrest of 32 men for the "evil crime" of possessing and disseminating child pornography.

But the dozens of arrests hardly make a significant dent, authorities said.

"That's the tip of the iceberg," said Sgt. Michael Hill of the Massachusetts Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. "We're going to be doing this for a long time."

The statewide bust, dubbed "Operation Corral," was conducted last week by local, state and federal authorities, officials said yesterday while nouncing the arrests.

The suspects ranged in age from 17 to 62. All were charged with possession of child pornography, dissemination of child pornography or both. Some men faced additional charges.

The issue has gained a lot of attention in the last few weeks after the arrest of Newton teacher David Ettlinger. He is accused of possessing child pornography and videotaping some of his attacks on children, but police said these arrests are not related to his case.

Some of the suspects simply downloaded images while others had set up their own networks for sharing the pictures and videos. Thousands of images were discovered and some depicted infants and toddlers, authorities said.

State police Col. Marian McGovern said investigators had to look at "some of the most despicable and horrible images you can ever see."

She said if it were not for the technical skill and intelligence of the investigators, they may never have made the arrests.

"If you look at the [pictures], these people are your next door neighbors … doing this in the cover of their homes," she said.

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
michael.naughton@metro.us

Suspects

According to state police and the Suffolk district attorney's office, some of those arrested in the sweep include:

- **Jacob Hall**, 27, of Arlington, possession and dissemination of child pornography
- **Phil Hunt**, 55, of Natick, possession and dissemination of child pornography
- **Raymond O'Hara**, 56, Dedham, possession and dissemination of child pornography
- **Rodolfo Marino Lopez**, 37, Hyde Park, possession and dissemination of child pornography
- **Josue Molina**, 27, Revere, possession of child pornography
- **Carlos Londono-Cantano**, 44, East Boston, possession and dissemination of child pornography
- **Jose Usaga**, 52, East Boston, possession and dissemination of child pornography
- **Jose Salgado**, 57, Chelsea, possession and dissemination of child pornography.

Resources needed

BOSTON. State police Col. Marian McGovern said that while the sweep only took a week to round up the suspects, it took months of collaboration.

These types of cases are "resource intensive investigations," she said.

"We can always use more resources," said Sgt. Michael Hill. METRO

BPD helped start sweep

BOSTON. The Boston Police Department has its own crimes against children unit, which investigates abuse of children daily.

Commissioner Ed Davis credited Detective Dan Fagan of that unit for helping to launch the statewide sweep after conducting an investigation in Boston. METRO

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Smoke begins to clear in pot debate

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ Members of the Joint Committee on Public Health listen to testimony at yesterday's hearing.

The debate about legalizing medical marijuana continues to roll forward after legislators heard testimony yesterday from those for and against a bill to put pot in the hands of the sick and suffering.

During a hearing on Beacon Hill before the Joint Committee on Public Health, advocates urged lawmakers to pass legislation that would allow patients to access prescription pot to ease their ailments.

"I'm almost 60 years old, and it would be nice in my later years not to have to go on the street to find medical marijuana," said Eric McCoy, who has been using marijuana to help quell pains caused by multiple sclerosis.

Those against the measure said legalizing the drug could lead to increased accessibility beyond the intended population of patients.

If passed, the bill would set up 35 dispensaries around the state to distribute the drug.

Committee co-chairman Jeffrey Sanchez was skeptic about passing a law that would conflict with federal rules, however.

"I think the feds have been clear that they would go forward [and prosecute dispensaries]," said Sanchez.

If the bill does not get legislative support, proponents will need to harvest 11,485 voter signatures to get the question onto the ballot in November.

STEVE ANNEAR
steve.annear@metro.us

T bus accident injures six passengers

BOSTON. Six MBTA bus passengers were sent to area hospitals yesterday after their bus collided with a car on Route 21.

According to T officials, around 11:30 a.m., a vehicle cut in front of a bus at the intersection of Morton and Hannon Sreets and the bus rear-ended the car.

Eight people, including two occupants in the car, were transported to area hospitals for non-life-threatening back, neck and head injuries.

The driver of the car was cited by Transit Police for making an illegal turn. **METRO**

One entrance on Green Line

BOSTON. MBTA officials are warning passengers that starting April 17, everyone must board at the front of Green Line trains at above-ground stations.

The changes come as the T tries to stop fare evaders from getting a free ride. The new system will be implemented during weekends, holidays and off-peak hours.

Front-door -only fare collection is already in effect on other branches of the Green Line.

METRO

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BLOG

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Sweater vest season is officially over

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

▶ If history is any guide — and it is — we can expect to see more of Rick Santorum in the future.

For complaints, suggestions and digital attaboys, e-mail us at brayden.simms@metro.us.

Well, that's over. In the end, Rick Santorum — who ended his long-shot presidential campaign yesterday at a surprise press conference in Gettysburg, Pa. — chose the easy way out.

"We made a decision over the weekend," Santorum said, "that while this presidential race for us is over, for me, and we will suspend our campaign today, we are not done fighting." He pointedly failed to mention his nearest rival, the more-inevitable-than-ever Mitt Romney.

Santorum wasn't clear on the reasons for his campaign suspension. He did mention his ill daughter, Bella, who was released from the hospital Monday after a weekend in which the candidate canceled campaign events for her sake.

Cynical poll-watchers will point to depressing numbers for the upcoming April 24 primary in Pennsylvania — the state Santorum represented in Congress until 2006 — as a simple reason for his departure. A loss in his "home state" would have dealt the Santorum brand an embarrassing blow, especially after the 18-point defeat he suffered just six years ago, the largest losing margin of an incumbent senator for some 30 years. As it stands, the surprisingly successful campaign could give the candidate the chance of another presidential run in 2016.

The Romney campaign had already committed to throwing $2.9 million into the Pennsylvania race and ending Santorum once and for all. Adding insult, the ad assault was going to aim squarely at his Senate loss. "We fired him as senator, why promote him to president?" one ad asked.

Of course, there remain three total candidates in the Republican race: Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich has vowed to stay in all the way to the convention, and Rep. Ron Paul has yet to repudiate his mysterious caucus strategy. Then there's Romney, still as ever the likely nominee.

There are some (see: us) who say the conservative crusader never stood a real chance at the highest office in the nation. But for all of Santorum's detractors (see again: us) it's hard to deny the campaign's accomplishments. What began as a shoestring effort launched out of a borrowed pickup truck emerged as a real candidacy capable of moving issues starkly rightward. And though he's officially out, his impact persists. As Romney pivots back toward the center, the specter of Santorum will remain.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages.

Metropolitik

BRAYDEN SIMMS

POLITICAL WORLDLINESS FOR AN IMPOLITE WORLD

@METROPOLITIK

"This game is a long, long, long way from over."
SANTORUM YESTERDAY, ANNOUNCING THE SUSPENSION OF HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

"It's halftime."
SANTORUM, EXACTLY ONE WEEK AGO

"Game's over, dude."
JON STEWART ON SANTORUM LAST THURSDAY, ON 'THE DAILY SHOW'

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myentertainment

THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Bette Midler wants better technology manners, Ralph Macchio is getting some culture, Michael McKean has some awards show improvement ideas and Sarah Silverman wants you to relax and get back to work.

@BetteMidler: Jeez! I just bumped into a crowd a people all looking down at their devices!! Look up, people!!

@ralphmacchio: Taking in some broadway today. Vintage musical theatre on the menu.

@MJMcKean: Emmy show producers: please please PLEASE let J Lo announce the Downton Abbey nominations.

@SarahKSilverman: Worrying u don't get the respect u deserve is a great way to ensure you'll never get the respect u deserve

Macchio

Did Lisa Rinna make a career misstep? It Depends!

Maybe you've seen **Lisa Rinna** star in a new Depend adult diapers commercial. But in case you haven't, here's the recap: The 48-year-old is filmed wearing a skintight black dress on the red carpet — but, surprise! She's also wearing Depend's new Silhouette for Women line underneath that dress.

"I am wearing an evening gown, for God's sake!" she says in the commercial. "And you can't tell I have it on. Check out the boo-tay!" She then commands her poor husband **Harry Hamlin** to touch her tush to check it out for himself.

Surprising? Yes. Commercials for adult diapers are not the most, say, sexy of things to star in. But Rinna swears she's not talking about incontinence in order to keep herself in lip injections — she did it for charity and women's rights.

"They donated $225,000 to Dress for Success if I tried them on in the commercial," the actress told the Huffington Post, meaning she must have pocketed a little extra on top of that donation. "That's why I did it. Plus, I loved their campaign."

Rinna continues: "I don't endorse many products." (Ed note: True! The last time she was a "celebrity spokeswoman" was for The Flex Belt Abdominal Toning Belt; do with that information what you will.) "When I was first asked, I was surprised," she explains. "I'm not the first person you think of when you think of Depend. ... I believe women should feel good about themselves — and if that means they need to talk about their problems, then absolutely. We need to help each other. I was not afraid to do this."

I believe that too, as should most women. And it's not wearing an adult diaper that makes me roll my eyes — it's the fact that she used the word "boo-tay" to describe her butt.

PETER KRAMER/BRAVO

▶ Is Lisa Rinna the new, Botoxed face of incontinence?

"I believe women should feel good about themselves — and if that means they need to talk about their problems, then absolutely. We need to help each other." RINNA

Bynes: Back to the bar!

Less than 24 hours after being arrested for driving under the influence after colliding with a cop car, **Amanda Bynes** and pals reportedly went back to the same bar she'd been drinking at before the incident — but this time she was denied entry, according to TMZ. Sources say the bar's staff was aware of her arrest — and her presence there the night before — and decided against her returning. Bynes and her friends reportedly left without incident.

Bynes

Talking points

You have a chance with Zooey Deschanel

With a hit sitcom and a split from ex-husband **Ben Gibbard** keeping her busy, it should come as no surprise that **Zooey Deschanel** isn't spending much time dating. "Honestly, I'm just going through a divorce, so I don't really think that's something I want to get into now. I don't have time to date," she tells Marie Clare. At least she's not feeling any rush because she's getting older: "I'm a person who gets better with practice," she says. "Getting older is awesome — because you get more practice."

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Deschanel

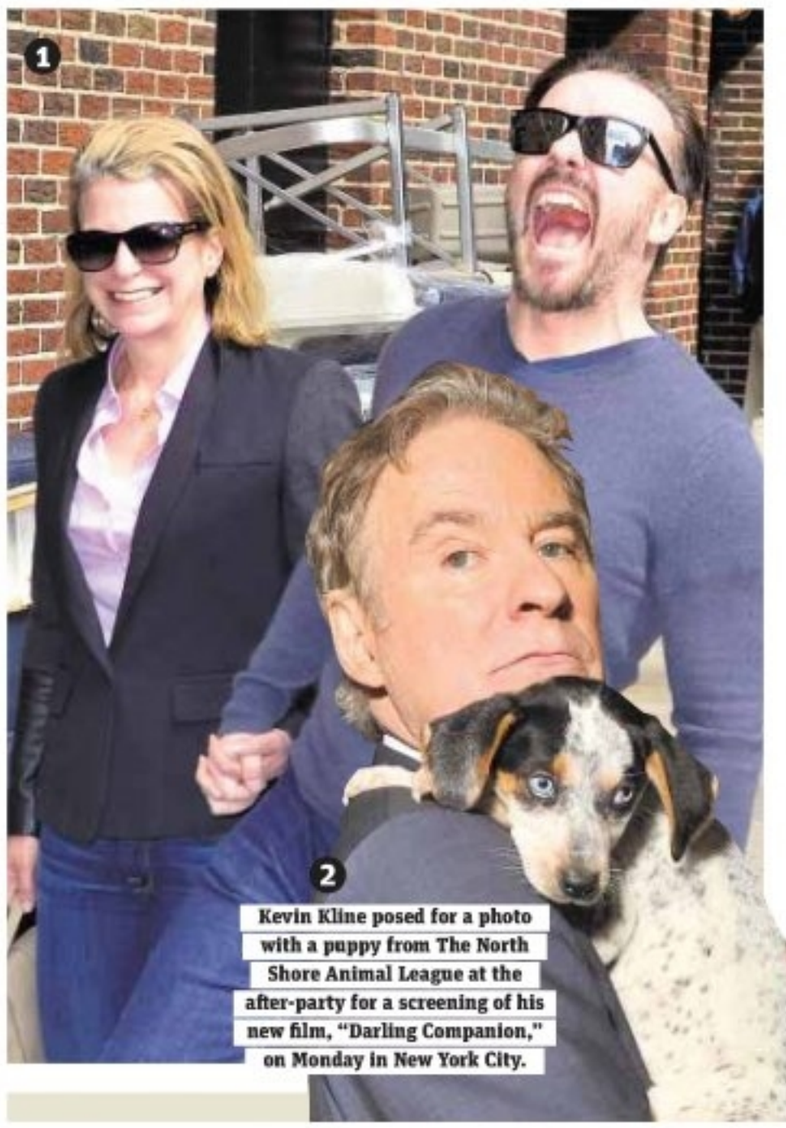
Cyrus explains away weight loss

Miley Cyrus is striking back against critics who speculate she has an eating disorder. "For everyone calling me anorexic, I have a gluten and lactose allergy. It's not about weight — it's about health," Cyrus posted on Twitter. "'She won't eat 2,000 calories worth of food in one sitting? She must have a problem.' I ate today at Easter lunch but all of it was healthy and even more fulfilling! Health is happiness!" In fact, Cyrus thinks her food allergy has been a great thing — and is encouraging her fans to dump gluten. "Everyone should try no gluten for a week! The change in your skin, physical and mental health is amazing! You won't go back," she posted.

Lohan has a good alibi (for once)

A woman is accusing **Lindsay Lohan** of attacking her at a party in the Standard Hotel in West Hollywood recently — but Lohan's rep insists the troubled actress didn't even leave her home the night in question, according to TMZ. The website seems to be on Lohan's side: "We have spoken with six people at the hotel — some of whom were working on the night in question — and none of them saw Lindsay that evening," the site reports. The woman in question claims she was assaulted by Lohan after chatting up a guy the actress had her eye on. "Lindsay was absolutely not involved in any sort of altercation whatsoever. This is clearly another case of someone looking for money," Lohan's rep, Steve Honig, says. "You have to wonder about someone who calls the media before the police."

Fey's bootleg Muppets and Kline's pup



Kevin Kline posed for a photo with a puppy from The North Shore Animal League at the after-party for a screening of his new film, "Darling Companion," on Monday in New York City.

▶ **1. Jane Fallon** and boyfriend **Ricky Gervais** visited "Late Show With David Letterman" at Ed Sullivan Theater on Monday in New York City.

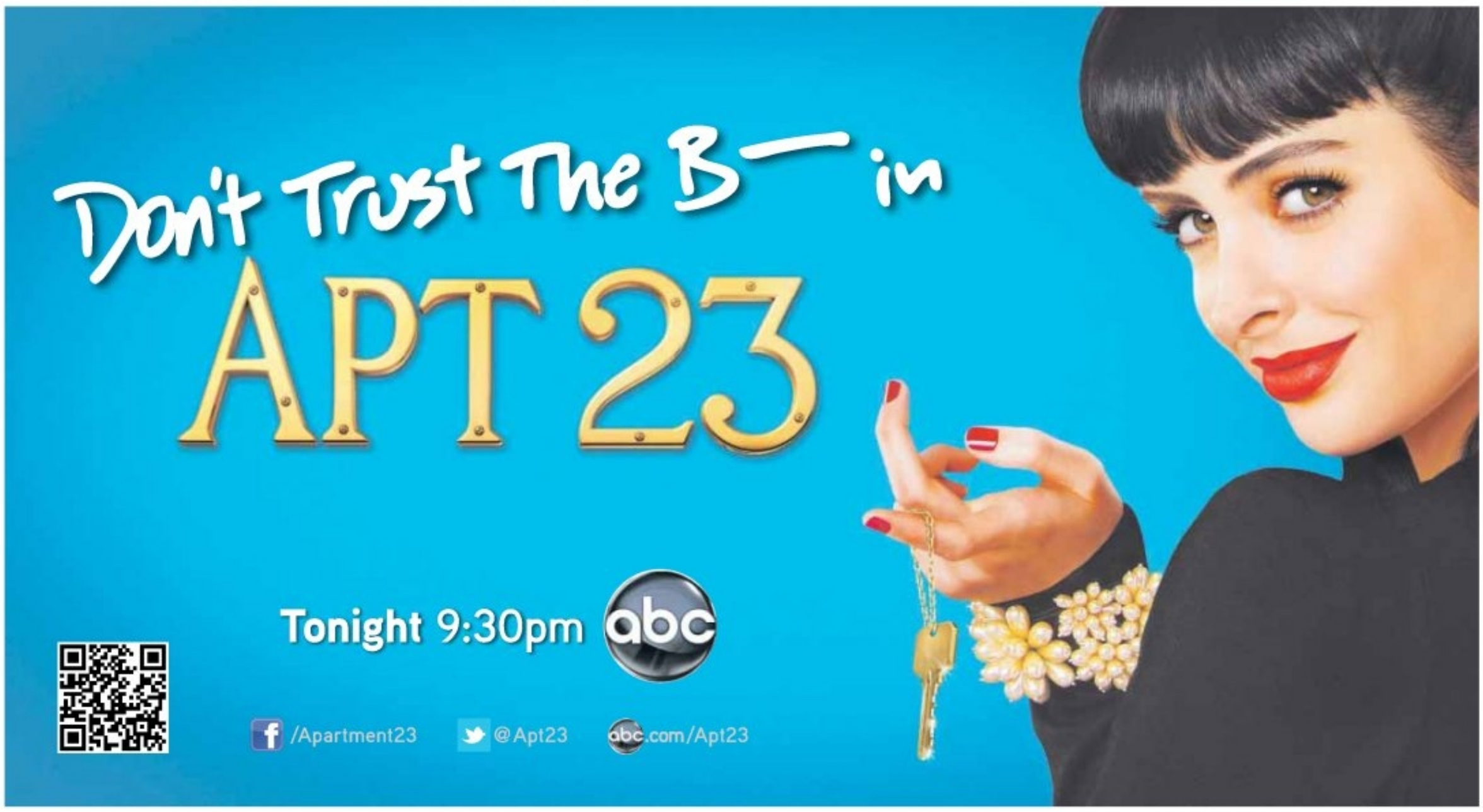
▶ **3. Tina Fey** was spotted with some Muppet knock-offs while filming on location for "30 Rock" on Monday in New York City.

▶ **4.** Musician **Ronnie Wood** opened his art show, titled "Faces, Time and Places," at 498 Broome Street on Monday in New York City.

▶ **5. Zac Efron** popped up at the world premiere of his new film "The Lucky One" on Monday in Sydney, Australia.

▶ **6. Kanye West** and **2 Chainz,** who has worked with West this past year, stopped by the 106 & Park Studio on Monday in New York City.

1: ALO CEBALLOS/FILMMAGIC
2: STEPHEN LOVEKIN/GETTY IMAGES
3: BOBBY BANK/WIREIMAGE
4: MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY IMAGES
5: LISA MARIE WILLIAMS/GETTY IMAGES
6: CRAIG BARRITT/GETTY IMAGES

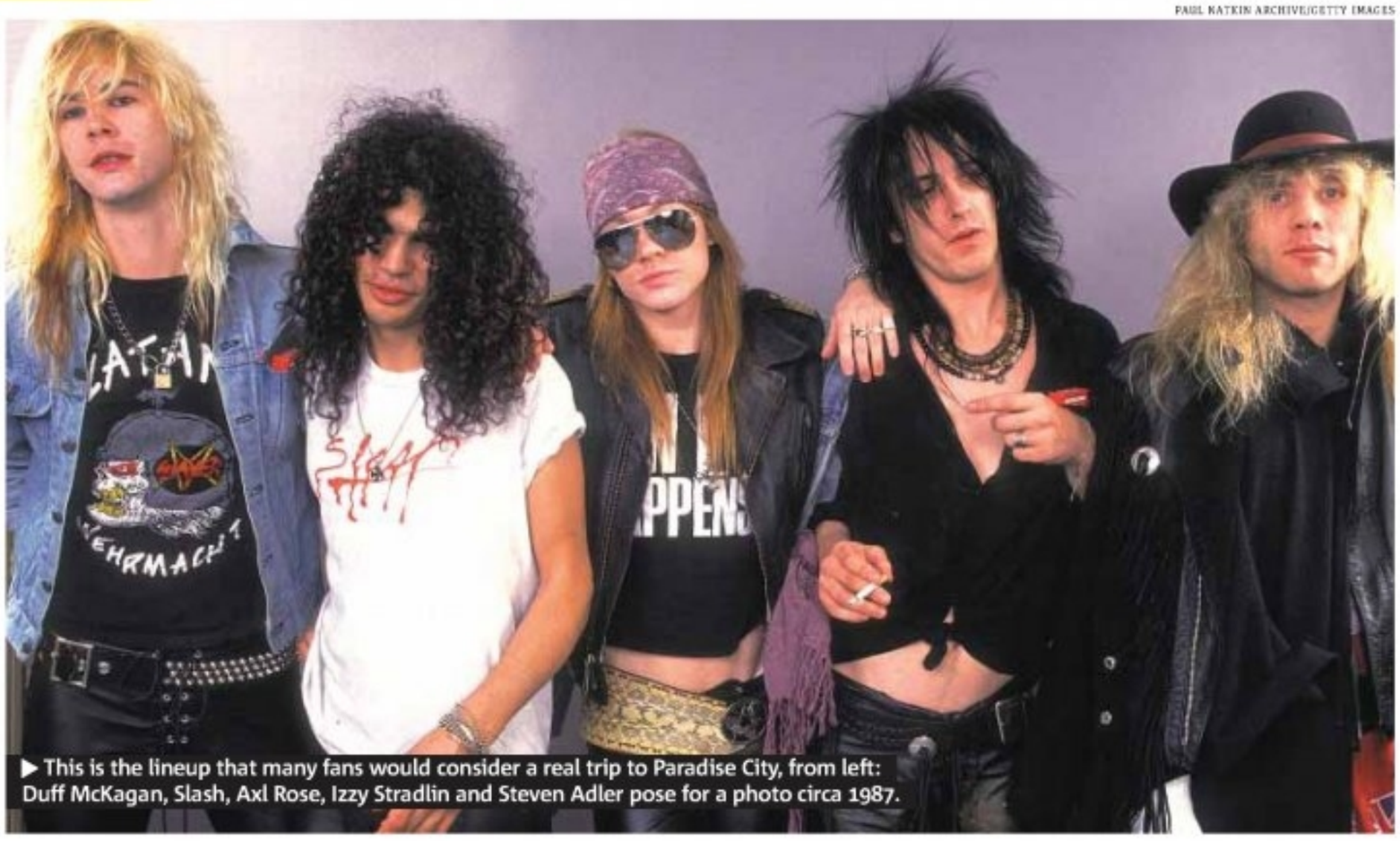


myentertainment

Welcome back to the jungle?

When Guns N' Roses are inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on Saturday, many fans are wondering which version of the legendary hard rock band it will be Longtime keyboardist recently told Metro he didn't even know

PAUL NATKIN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



▶ This is the lineup that many fans would consider a real trip to Paradise City, from left: Duff McKagan, Slash, Axl Rose, Izzy Stradlin and Steven Adler pose for a photo circa 1987.

Guns N' Roses are known for their interband civil wars as much as the classic music they made together. They have counted as many as 21 people as official players throughout the 27-year history of the band name, but many rock fans are penning open letters across the Web for a reunion of the band whose members were once so well known as individuals that they had their own mass-produced pinball machine.

Gn'R members are also well known for their cynical approach to press — so in February when Metro caught up with keyboardist Dizzy Reed, who joined the band in the early '90s, shortly before the "Use Your Illusion" albums, he played it predictably close to the vest when asked about the upcoming proceedings.

So what do you know about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame? Um, it's in Cleveland.

Do you know what's going to happen with the Gn'R induction into the Hall? There are rumors there will be a reunion of the original lineup.
I haven't gotten any details. I spoke with the people of that institution. They gave me a call and told me to mark it on the calendar, to be there. As far as the details of what's going to happen, I haven't received any sort of itinerary or schedule. It's something I'm just trying not to think about until it gets closer. It's not that I don't appreciate it. It's a great thing, and it's great for all the people who supported the band over the years.

I understand that you're still friends with everybody who has been in the band through the years, is that right?
Friendly, I'd say. I haven't talked to a couple of the guys at all since they left. But Duff [McKagan, original bassist] got up and jammed with us in Seattle and Vancouver last year. His band, Loaded, opened up for us, which was fantastic. Izzy [Stradlin, an original guitarist] came and did a few shows with us and sat in, in 2010, which was cool.

Weren't you and Izzy kind of like ships passing in the night?
No, we played together. When I actually joined the band, it was still the original five guys. With Steven [Adler, original drummer], we recorded "Civil War," and then I didn't see him again, and then we had a new drummer. But Izzy toured with us right up to when the "Use Your Illusion" albums came out.

I just remember the "Don't Cry" video that featured a sign that said, "Where's Izzy?"
Oh yeah. That was on my jacket.

And some may say you were immortalized when you made it onto the Guns N' Roses pinball machine.
Yes I did. I'm on the pinball machine, and I can't remember what it was that triggers it, but you can get the "Dizzy ball," and it starts going crazy and you can score a whole bunch of points. I think it was patterned after me after too many vodkas or something.

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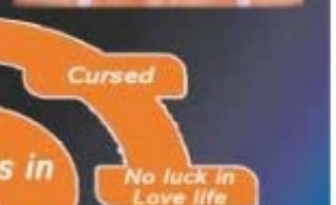

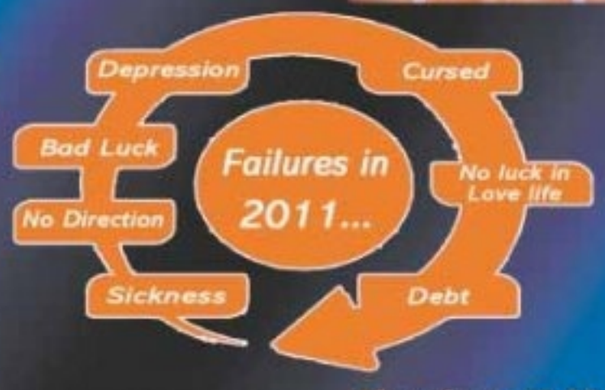

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Going crazy for 'Next to Normal'

Plot points

When an arsenal of psychopharmaceuticals and never-ending trips to the therapist fail to keep suburban mom Diana's mental illness in check, her family is forced to look elsewhere for help and ultimately come face to face with their own demons.

The SpeakEasy's latest is an insanely good rock opera about a family dealing with mental illness
Kerry Dowling is at her best in this production

CRAIG BAILEY/PERSPECTIVE PHOTO

▶ Shock therapy: Dowling shines in "Next to Normal."

"Next to Normal" is anything but. It's a musical about the devastating effects of mental illness on a seemingly idyllic suburban family. Just getting to the not-so-happily-ever-after ending requires a ride on an emotional roller coaster that might leave you begging for some of the medication they're singing about.

But it's brilliant. And the SpeakEasy Stage Company's stellar production is one of its finest works to date.

The rock opera boasts an amazing score that perfectly captures the highs and lows of navigating your way through the mental health system. Its blisteringly accurate commentary on our culture's desire to feel numb is at its best when Diana (Kerry Dowling) sings that her psychopharmacologist "knows my deepest secrets and I know his name."

Dowling delivers a stellar turn as the woman battling bipolar disorder. Her vocals are spot-on and the subtleties of her performance vacillate perfectly between heartbreaking and infuriating. This SpeakEasy mainstay — with a long, impressive career — has never been better.

Sarah Drake also shines as Diana's overachieving daughter, Natalie. The Boston Conservatory senior nicely keeps you wondering whether Natalie is in the early stages of her own battle with mental illness or simply coping with a life that is certainly not normal.

Initially, Michael Tacconi charms the socks off the audience with his delightful turn as Diana's teenage son Gabe. But it's his later transformation and impressive vocal chops that'll impact you the most.

Christopher Chew is perfectly weary and worn out as Diana's "boring" husband Dan. But he, too, undergoes a chilling transformation that changes everything.

Eric Levenson's minimalist set and Jeff Adelberg's impeccably executed lighting design set the perfect scene in this flawless production.

If you go

'Next to Normal'
Through April 22
BCA Calderwood Pavilion
527 Tremont St., Boston
$25-$55, 617-933-8600
www.speakeasystage.com

NICK DUSSAULT
nick.dussault@metro.us

Coolidge braces for the Big Mouth Off

After hearing hundreds of storytellers from 20 different open-story slams over the past six months, Massmouth Inc. is hosting the Big Mouth Off, a Story Slam Grand Finale tonight at 7 at the Coolidge Corner Theatre (290 Harvard St., Brookline). Massmouth participants have traditionally come from all walks of life, sharing stories on the mic without any notes like on the popular podcast, The Moth. Amongst tonight's 15 featured storytellers is Metro's own Scott Schultz, who made it into the BMO with a story he calls "Horse Party." For more info, visit http://bigmouthoff-eorg.eventbrite.com.

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myentertainment

Krysten Ritter owns the B-word

The antihero at the (black) heart of new sitcom 'Don't Trust the B— in Apartment 23' isn't very likable — and that's the point

ABC/ADAM LARKEY

▶ Krysten Ritter, left, and Dreama Walker star in "Don't Trust the B— in Apartment 23," premiering tonight at 9:31 on ABC.

It may seem harsh to refer to your main character as a b—. But there's really no other way to describe opportunist Chloe (Krysten Ritter) in the new ABC sitcom "Don't Trust the B— in Apartment 23." With the self-professed "morals of a pirate," Chloe is an unaffected schemer whose only loyalties lie with her close friends.

"If Holly Golightly and Satan had a child, it would be my character," admits Ritter.

James Van Der Beek, who plays Chloe's best friend James Van Der Beek in a gleeful send-up of the "Dawson's Creek" star, has a slightly different view: "[She's] the love child of Lucille Ball and Sid Vicious," he says.

Quoted

"As long as I approach my character in making positive choices, that the end result seems to be somewhat heartfelt, you can get away with it." RITTER

No matter her mythical parentage, Chloe tiptoes the line between bad and just plain awful — in the pilot, she robs her sweet, new-to-New-York roommate, June (Dreama Walker) — which means the balance between audiences loving or loathing Ms. B is even more precarious.

But Ritter rationalizes that Chloe's actions, despite how outlandish they seem, aren't always selfish. (Wait till you see how Chloe suggests June dump her boyfriend in tonight's premiere.) "As long as I approach my character in making positive choices, that the end result seems to be somewhat heartfelt, you can get away with it," she says.

After all, even seemingly naive June is able to crack Chloe's tough-girl persona and ultimately become a member of her oddball entourage.

"June definitely … outsmarts Chloe a little bit," Walker says. "That's part of our dynamic and part of what makes her respect me and like me in the end."

So is the B-word a severe moniker after all? Ritter doesn't think so.

"I'm an evil b—," she says.

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Beat your allergies this year

We got some expert tips on just how to get rid of your sniffles and itchy eyes You've got plenty of options

When you have allergies, you know how tough it can be to make it through a spring day — let alone a spring hour.

"Your body's natural defenses are overreacting to substances that are usually not harmful," says Dr. Carol G. Baum, an allergist at New York City's ENT and Allergy Associates, about how allergic reactions start. And lately, as you've probably heard, the conditions for these springtime vexations are only getting worse.

"Every year we hear that this is the worst allergy season ever, but I think there is an understanding that with climate change our winters are warmer — and certainly that was the case this year," Dr. Baum says. "Because of that, the allergy seasons tend to start a little earlier and last a little longer, and also the pollen levels tend to be a little higher. All those things are a perfect storm for causing allergies."

Thankfully, you can find comfort amidst the budding trees. These ideas will make you breathe a little easier.

Option A:

Avoidance

Simply put: Learn your triggers and get out of their way. "If someone is allergic to pollen, I try to encourage them to run air-conditioning," Dr. Baum says. "If they're in the car, have the windows closed, run the air-conditioning. I always try to encourage people not to get a home close to a highway where there's a lot of pollutants. I try to encourage pets to be out of the home and certainly out of the bedroom — you spend a third of your life sleeping in a bedroom, [and] dander can get into the bedding."

Option B:

Medication

"There's a lot of medications available," Dr. Baum says. "They include oral antihistamines as well as topical antihistamines or steroids that may be applied as sprays to the nose or as drops to the eyes." And good news: You can find a combination that works best for you. "You can certainly take an antihistamine, you can certainly use a topical nasal spray, you can certainly use anti-inflammatory medication, you can at the same time get allergy shots," she adds. "They're not all mutually exclusive."

Last resorts

Dr. Baum recommends oral steroids for severe cases that aren't letting up. Surgery is another option.

MEREDITH ENGEL
meredith.engel@metro.us

COMSTOCK

▶ Managing your allergies can be a walk in the park.

Option C:

Allergy shots

Allergen immunotherapy, or allergy shots, exposes your body to allergens in small doses. "You give minute amounts of the allergen very gradually, on a weekly basis, usually over a period of about six months," Dr. Baum says. "Then they get monthly injections for a period that can run usually between three and five years. What it's doing is basically making the patient tolerant to these allergens that they're exposed to so that they don't have these allergic reactions. It tends to be very effective."

Option D:

Neti pots

Don't fear these little contraptions. Dr. Travis Stork, an emergency doc and host of "The Doctors," says their healing capabilities are legit.

"Your sinuses are interconnected. The saline water is going through your sinuses and washing away allergens and pollen. It's very refreshing if you've been suffering from congestion."

And if you're a little squeamish about trying one for yourself, don't worry: You'll get used to it.

"Everyone's a little hesitant, because the first time you do it it's slightly awkward. But after the first time, it's like riding a bike."

Just make sure you use the right water: distilled or previously boiled, with a lukewarm temperature. "You want the water to be sterile," Dr. Stork says.

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Health in brief

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Concern over 'pink slime'
88 percent of U.S. adults are aware of the "pink slime" issue.
76 percent are "at least somewhat concerned" about it.
30 percent are "extremely concerned."
53 percent have taken action, including researching the ground beef they purchase.
22 percent have either decreased and/or stopped their consumption of foods using ground beef in restaurants.
25 percent have stopped purchasing ground beef from grocery stores.
Source: Red Robin restaurants

Today in medicine

Your taste in men might change if you're on the pill

Study subjects: 2,500 women worldwide taking oral contraceptives
Location of study: U.K.
Results: In a new study from the University of Stirling in Scotland, women with lower testosterone levels were found to be more attracted to "less masculine" men with lower testosterone levels. A low testosterone level in women can be caused by the use of birth control pills. However, once these women stopped taking the pill, they had less interest in these "less masculine" men.
Significance: Although this contradicts the norm that women are attracted to men with high testosterone levels, other studies have found that men with lower testosterone are less likely to stray, more supportive and better at caring for their family.

BRAND X PICTURES

▶ Are you into him, or his low testosterone level?

Geography and heart disease

Study subjects: Nationwide survey of women's health
Location of study: U.S.
Results: New research from Brigham and Women's Hospital states that a woman's risk for cardiovascular inflammation — which can lead to heart disease — is higher if she lives in a state with a high rate of poverty. The individual's diet, weight, personal income level, exercise and smoking habits did not alter these findings.
Significance: "Geography matters for heart disease risk," lead researcher Dr. Cheryl R. Clark says.

Obesity and autism risk

Study subjects: 1,004 California children, aged 2 to 5
Location of study: U.S.
Results: A study in Pediatrics found that mothers who were 35 pounds or more overweight during pregnancy were more likely to deliver babies with autism or other like disorders.
Significance: About 60 percent of childbearing-age women in the U.S. are overweight, according to the study's researchers. If you're overweight and ready for a baby, talk to your doctor about how to have a healthy pregnancy.

STOCKBYTE

▶ You need lots of iodine for a healthy baby.

Young women and iodine deficiency

Study subjects: Women 20-39 years old
Location of study: U.S.
Results: Young women in the U.S. have borderline levels of iodine, putting them at risk for iodine deficiency, the CDC says.
Significance: Iodine is necessary for thyroid health. The hormones in your thyroid help control growth and development. Pregnant women need a good supply of iodine for a healthy fetus. Seaweed is a great source of dietary iodine. LINDA CLARKE

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mywellbeing

Now's the time to get tested for STDs

- In this case, ignorance isn't bliss
- It's vital for your health (and your partner's) to be in the know
- April is STD Awareness Month

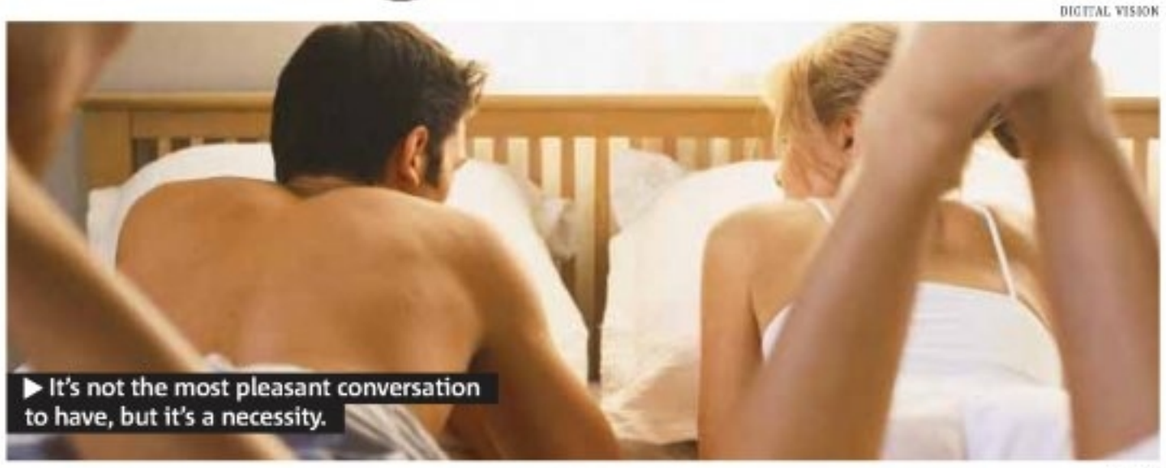
Think you'll never get an STD? Think again. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are 19 million new infections every year in the United States, with young people aged 15 to 24 accounting for nearly half of them. Most STDs are easy to treat and cure in the early stages, but many can be asymptomatic for years — which means you might be walking around with one and not even know it.

"Teens and young adults are more socially active and that is a factor," says Brigham and Women's obstetrician/gynecologist Dr. Khady Diouf, who specializes in infectious diseases. "But, biologically, young women are particularly vulnerable to STDs, because the womb is immature and much more susceptible to infections."

But STDs are not just a young person's or a woman's problem. Any sexually active person can contract one, and the risk increases with the number of sexual partners. Prevention via proper condom use and regular STD tests are the ways to stem these diseases.

"For [people] under 25, annual testing should be part of general health care," advises Dr. Diouf, "but for older adults who are sexually active, testing is important, too. Doctors aren't comfortable about asking about sexual health, and it's important to get that information."

DIGITAL VISION



▶ It's not the most pleasant conversation to have, but it's a necessity.

CREATAS

▶ If you're pregnant or want to get pregnant soon, make sure your doc knows your sexual history.

Pregnant? What you need to know

Having an STD during pregnancy can cause preterm labor, low birth weight, organ damage and a host of other issues for your baby. Before trying to conceive, a woman should know her STD status and that of her partner.

"Think of it as part of your prepregnancy checklist, along with cutting out alcohol, taking vitamins and exercising," says Dr. Lisa Oldson of Sexualhealth.com. "It should be a part of prenatal care, but even for someone who is already pregnant, testing can help the doctor be prepared and protect the baby at birth."

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You cannot get HIV from this investigational HIV vaccine.

2

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GUYS EXPERIENCING LUBE projectgel

3

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- 18-30 years old?
- A man who has sex with men?
- Willing to be tested for HIV?

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- Be tested for HIV.
- Complete a physical exam, including an anal exam.
- Be asked questions about your medical and sexual history.

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Letters

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War plus tax cuts equals recession

RE: "MEDIA ECHO CHAMBER OBSCURES THE TRUTH": Maybe if Mr. Sargent read more than one media source, he would know that the reason for the big deficit is a big tax cut followed by the cost of two wars that weren't made part of the budget until Obama was in office. And he would also know that most Americans are very afraid of what might happen to Social Security and Medicare.
KATHY KOURIAN, BEDFORD

Actually, voter fraud alive and well

RE: "BE VERY SCARED OF THE FRAUD MONSTER!": There is no voter fraud? Are you serious? Have you ever heard of ACORN? You know, the organization caught registering dead people, Mickey Mouse, the Dallas Cowboys and thousands of other nonexistent people all for the 2008 Obama election. Have you heard of the ACORN court cases and their records being seized? Or what about the voter fraud case in Troy, N.Y., in which absentee ballots were submitted and those individuals declared that they never voted? A quick Internet search for voter fraud will unveil that voter fraud is a problem. To say otherwise is delusional. And this claim about disenfranchising the poor is nonsense. We all have to have ID to work etc. Requiring a person to show ID to prove they are alive, registered to vote and physically living in the district is not disenfranchisement and to say otherwise is delusional.
MARY STONE, VIA E-MAIL

US pendulum tilts toward socialism

RE: "POLITICS: POINT ... AND COUNTERPOINT": That wasn't a counterpoint. It was more of a rant from a person on the edge. RFID implants, concentration camps sound more like a person who is "losing it"! Mr. Blong's remarks were points of truth. Can't you tell the difference between "point — counterpoint"? Not "point — insane rant!"
VERONICA HODGES, VIA E-MAIL

Conspiracy theories aside, the overreach of the federal government is all too apparent. Whether a government goes the Marxist route and nationalizes the bank, or goes the U.S. route and declares a right to take their income through the tax system and offer tham tax payer capital as special bailout loans, there is more than one road to fascism. Our pendulum is certainly swinging towards socialism — and away from capitalism.
HANS HAUGEN, VIA E-MAIL

Amanda Bynes is just another Lohan

RE: "AMANDA BYNES ARRESTED FOR DUI": So what else is new? Actress Amanda Bynes arrested for DUI. The young lady has that blank look on her face in that mug shot. Sadly, it's the same blank face she has in all the movies I've seen her in. Even sadder, it's the blank-face look of today's entertainment industry, be it movies, TV or music. **HERB STARK, VIA E-MAIL**

Depression wasn't an easy fix either

Everyone conveniently forgets that all the "experts" in the world couldn't make a dent in the Great Depression for over a decade, just like they can't do anything to fix the Great Recession.
MILTON KATZIS, VIA E-MAIL

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

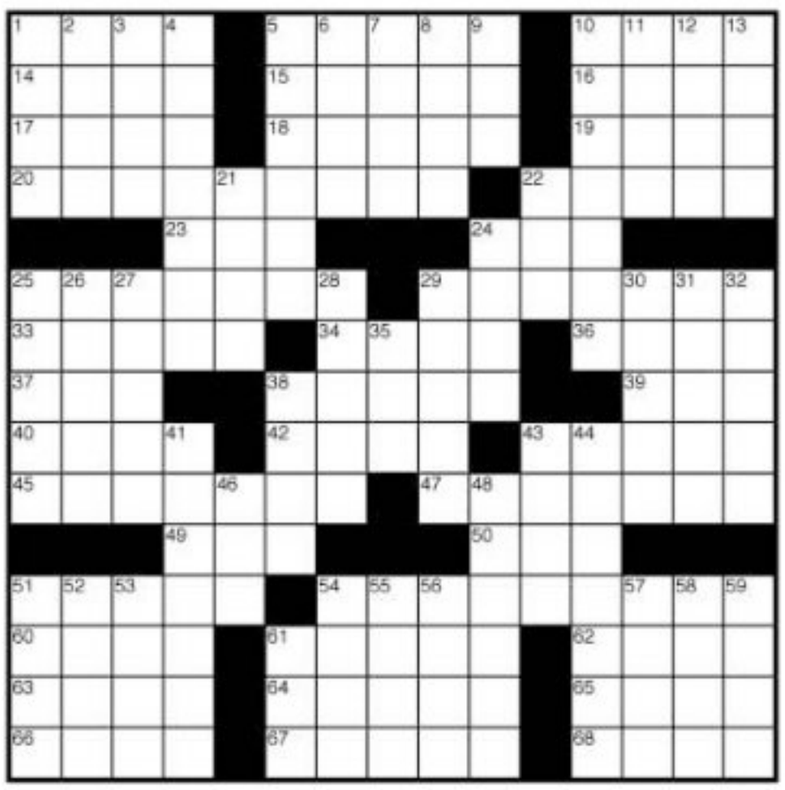
Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
Metro reserves the right to edit all letters.
Please include your name and contact information.

Horoscope

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Success shouldn't be denied you unless you get impatient and start to judge events before you have all the facts at your disposal. Hold your horses.
♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Just because you don't get everything you want is no reason to feel sorry for yourself. Concentrate on what you did get — and count your blessings, not the ones that got away.
♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Instead of feeling obligated to do business with the same firm you've always gone to, try another company that is offering you a deal. Sentiment won't save you dollars.
♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** If you fail to stick to an earlier agreement and instead decide to break the pact you made, you'll cause complications for yourself and tarnish your image. Don't do it.
♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** It's fun to get together with friends and let it all hang out, but be careful to follow sensible health habits or you'll pay a price. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** If you're anticipating getting something for nothing, it'll make you quite vulnerable to a canny manipulator. Don't be anyone's puppet.
♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** If you sense there is something wrong in a valued relationship, you should bring the matter out into the open. An honest, frank discussion should get things back on track.
♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Trying to rationalize your troubles away never works — it can be your worst enemy. This is especially so if it encourages you to postpone attending to a matter that needs immediate attention.
♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** It won't be one of your better days for managing personal resources if you are more reactive than introspective. Think of the consequences before you do anything.
♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** The results of your involvements are likely to be exactly as you anticipate. Be sure to think positive about everything and do what leads to victory, not defeat.
♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Although you normally keep everything you can out in the open, you might be tempted to resort to some subterfuge. Because this isn't your usual style, it'll make you very uncomfortable.
♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** If you're going to do something for a friend, do it out of the kindness of your heart and not in hopes of looking good and/or being rewarded.
BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Across
1 Gymnastics move
5 LaBelle or LuPone
10 Ages upon ages
14 Queue
15 From the top
16 Lie adjacent
17 Medea sailed on her
18 Reflects on deeply
19 Night attire
20 Stays even (2 wds.)
22 Take forcibly
23 Open meadow
24 __ alai
25 Blunt an appetite
29 Wood protector
33 Listens to
34 Patch
36 Envelope sealer
37 PCB regulator
38 Skirmish
39 She bear, in Madrid
40 Sets a price
42 __ -a-brac
43 Kuwaiti cash
45 Exhibit
47 Some Persian rugs
49 Pacino and Unser
50 Recent (pref.)
51 Commuter's home
54 Greenish patina
60 Dijon dad
61 Actor Cornel __
62 Per
63 Room offerers
64 Detective __ Pinkerton
65 Winged Victory
66 Autograph site
67 Baker's buy
68 "Paint the Sky with Stars" singer

Down
1 Strong opposition
2 Trevi Fountain coins
3 "Picnic" penner
4 Inhabited
5 Gaucho's land
6 Water, in Baja
7 Soapstone
8 Mah-jongg piece
9 Those elected
10 Hoop or stud
11 Woodwind
12 Short pencils
13 Dele's undoing
21 Mermaids' domains
22 Clash of arms
24 Sculpture medium
25 In the lead
26 7-Up rival
27 Maxes out
28 Coarse corundum
29 Sweater style (hyph.)
30 Ms. Massey of old films
31 Black-eyed __
32 Gets the news
35 Auto pioneer Ransom __ Olds
38 Execs' degrees
41 Leanest
43 Fritz's three
44 Funny Coca
46 Attorney's deg.
48 Start a paragraph
51 "Aeneid," e.g.
52 Lawless role
53 Footed vases
54 Contemptible
55 She, in Seville
56 Vitamin amts.
57 Wet forecast
58 Yucky
59 One-time Queens ballpark
61 __ cool!



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		3						9
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9	3			6			8	
	6			7	1	3		

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

9	2	4		8	3	5		
		5		2	6	1		
			7					
6					1			9
5								8
2			6					1
					9			
		2	3	1		9		
		8	5	7		4	3	6

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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5 Bruins who need to step up in the playoffs

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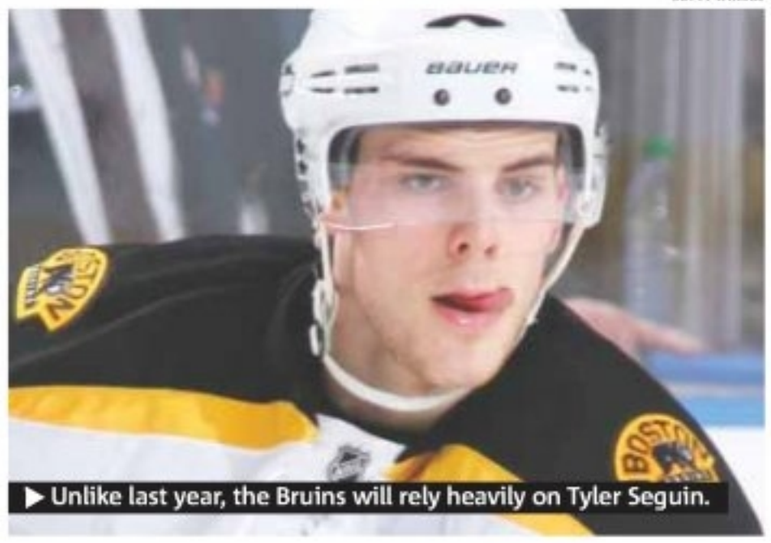


▶ Unlike last year, the Bruins will rely heavily on Tyler Seguin.

Admit it. A year ago at this time you weren't expecting much from the Bruins. They'd bow out of the playoffs within a round or two or maybe three, and then you'd turn your attention to the Red Sox.

The Bruins won't sneak up on anyone this spring. Beginning Thursday night versus Washington, against whom Boston was 1-2-1 this season, expectations will be high. Here are five players sure to factor into the team's performance in one way or another:

Tyler Seguin

After going scoreless in the final 10 games of February, Seguin found the net seven times in March and added two more scores in the meaningless finale versus Buffalo. The budding star had his moments in the playoffs last year (few can forget his out-of-nowhere, two-goal, two-assist effort in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference semifinals) and may be ripe for a breakout Stanley Cup playoffs performance, a la Brad Marchand last spring.

Tim Thomas

Too obvious? Maybe, but it is impossible not to mention the most important player on the ice, and the guy most responsible for the B's first Cup since 1972. Thomas got the rest he needed during the last couple of weeks of the season and is primed to stand tall once again. Repeating his performance from last spring will be next to impossible, but he ended on a very similar note. In Thomas' final eight games last season, he was 6-1-1 with a 1.48 GAA. This season? Try 6-1-1 with a 1.70 GAA.

David Krejci

The team's leading scorer during the Stanley Cup push, Krejci had an up-and-down regular season. He finished with a career-worst plus-minus of minus-5, and at one point in the second half of the season went nine games with just one point (an assist). However, like Seguin, Krejci caught fire once the calendar turned to March. Beginning with a hat trick on March 1, he had 10 goals and 11 assists in the final 21 games.

Timmy time

Tim Thomas will have to be at least close to what he was last year if the Bruins expect to defend their title:

- **798** was the number of playoff saves Thomas had in '11. A lot of goalies see that in an entire regular season.
- **1.98** was Thomas' GAA during the 2011 Cup run.

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Brian Rolston is used to the postseason grind.

Johnny Boychuk

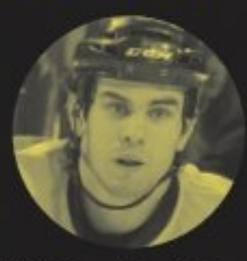
The most pressing health concern lies with Boychuk, the leader of the team's second defensive pairing. He sustained a left knee sprain April 3 and remains day-to-day. A key figure on the penalty kill, Boychuk is second to Zdeno Chara in plus-minus among Bruins defensemen. Boychuk will likely return for Game 1.

Brian Rolston

Rolston could very well be this year's Mark Recchi. Since coming to Boston via a trade with the Islanders, the 39-year-old Rolston had three goals and 12 assists in 15 games. Remember, some fans wanted Recchi benched early in the '11 playoffs, but Claude Julien stuck with his veteran and it proved to be a binding factor. Rolston can provide a similar presence.

TONY LEE
sports@metro.us

In the news



McQuaid status

Adam McQuaid missed practice in Wilmington, Mass. once again Tuesday due to what the Bruins are calling an "upper body injury."

The defenseman was originally injured when he went into the boards head first against Washington on March 29. He sustained a cut on his eye.

Backup goaltender Tuukka Rask practiced for the second straight day.

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Keys to victory vs. the Caps

It seemed an Ottawa series was in the cards, but Capitals are the team in Boston this week ◗ Game 1 of first-round series tomorrow night ◗ Ovechkin, Chara matchup should be one for the ages ◗ Thomas must be hot

It is not the matchup that was expected for most of February and March, but now, in April, it is the Capitals, not the Senators, who will take the ice Thursday night at TD Garden and make the first challenge to the Bruins' Stanley Cup throne.

It's an unexpected showdown, but also an intriguing one, as the Capitals came on strong at the finish to claim the No. 7 seed. Here are three keys to the series, which promises to be a long one.

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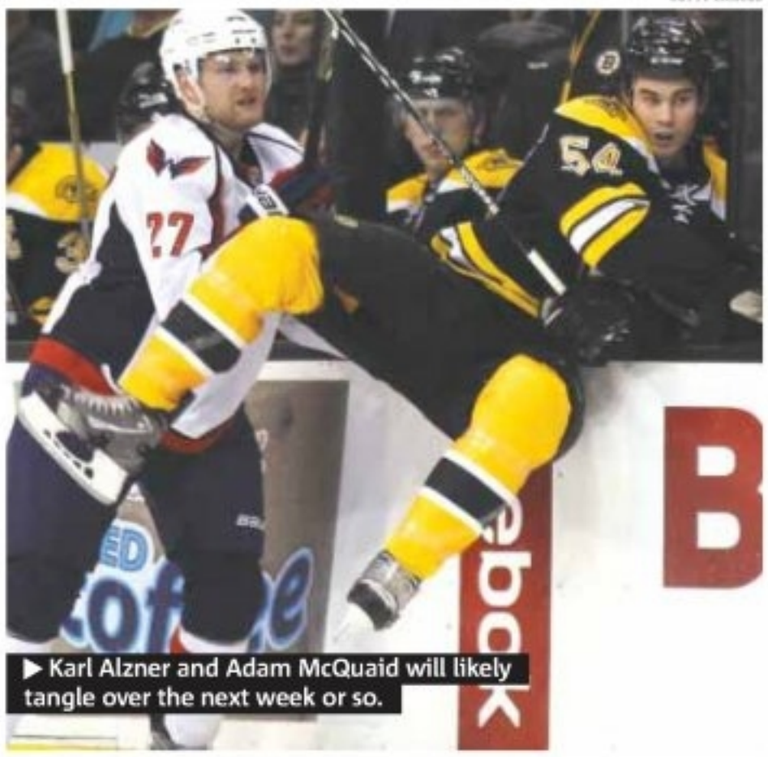

▶ Karl Alzner and Adam McQuaid will likely tangle over the next week or so.

Ovechkin vs. Chara

This is one of the marquee individual matchups in the first round, and one the Bruins have totally dominated. In his past seven games against the Bruins, Ovechkin, who led the Caps in goals (38) and points (65) this season, has just one goal, as the 6-foot-9 Chara has simply smothered the playmaker.

"Obviously they have a few great players on their team and sometimes the matchups are hard to get," Chara said. "Especially on the road, but when you do get them, you want to make the best out of them."

Bruins special teams

Amazingly, the Bruins won the Stanley Cup last season despite getting virtually no production on the man advantage. That doesn't figure to be a problem this series, as the Capitals are among the worst teams in the league defending the power play in general (81.6 percent, 21st), and even more so on the road, where their kill percentage is below 80 percent. But they did kill seven of eight power-play chances against the Bruins during the regular season, so maybe the drought of '11 isn't completely in the past.

On the other side, the Bruins were fourth-best when defending the 5-on-4, but allowed a league-high eight goals in 5-on-3 disadvantages. So staying out of the box — and the Caps drew the fourth-fewest penalties this season — is an obvious point of emphasis.

Quoted

"It's something that motivates me. It's something that I enjoy, competing against the best players."

BRUINS DEFENSEMAN ZDENO CHARA ON MATCHUP WITH ALEX OVECHKIN

Thomas, Take 2

Tim Thomas was sublimely brilliant in 2011, and as is so often the case in the Stanley Cup playoffs, the Bruins will only go as far as their goalie can take them. By wrapping up the No. 2 seed on the early side, the Bruins were finally able to give Thomas much needed rest. While Thomas dominated Ottawa this season in the win column (4-1), he actually had better save numbers against the Caps, with a .921 save percentage and 2.28 goals-against average, even if only one of his three games resulted in a win.

JEFF GOLDBERG
sports@metro.us

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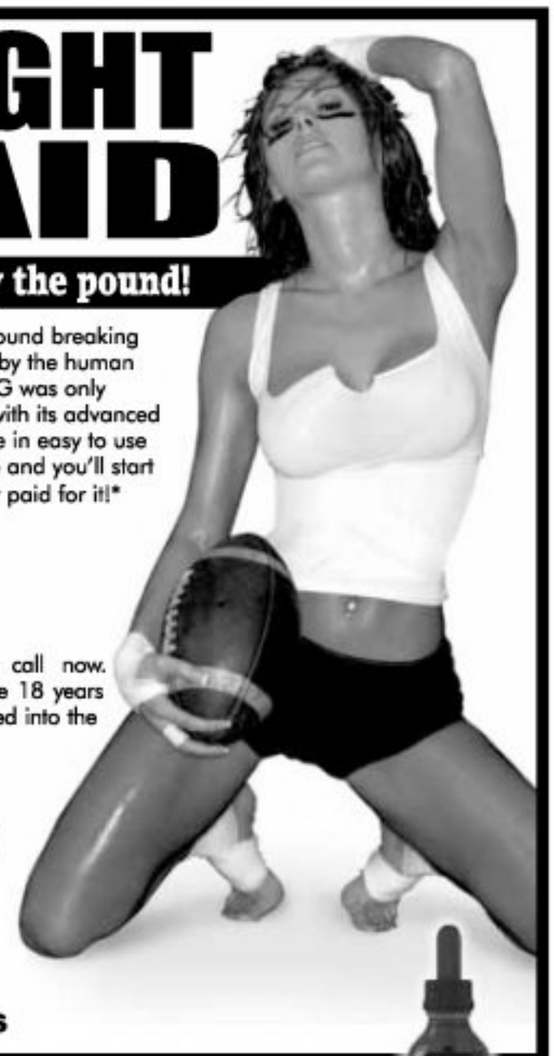

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Bruins Playoff Slate

Game 1: Tomorrow, 7:30 p.m. (NESN)

- **CAPITALS** at **BRUINS**
- The two franchises have met twice before in the playoffs in '90 and '98.

Game 2: Saturday, April 14, 3 p.m. (NBC)

- **CAPITALS** at **BRUINS**
- Both winners of the two series' advanced to the Stanley Cup finals that year.

Game 3: Monday, April 16, 7:30 p.m. (NESN)

- **BRUINS** at **CAPITALS**
- The Bruins boast six 20 goal scorers on their current roster.

Game 4: Thursday, April 19, 7:30 p.m. (NESN)

- **BRUINS** at **CAPITALS**
- Alex Ovechkin was fifth in NHL scoring this season.

Game 5: Saturday, April 21, 3 p.m. (NBC)

- **CAPITALS** at **BRUINS** (IF NECESSARY)
- The Bruins are first in the league in faceoffs, winning at a 54.5 percent clip.

Game 6: Sunday, April 22, TBD

- **BRUINS** at **CAPITALS** (IF NECESSARY)
- The winner of this one will bring home the coveted Adam Oates Cup.

Game 7: Wednesday, April 25, TBD (NESN)

- **CAPITALS** at **BRUINS** (IF NECESSARY)

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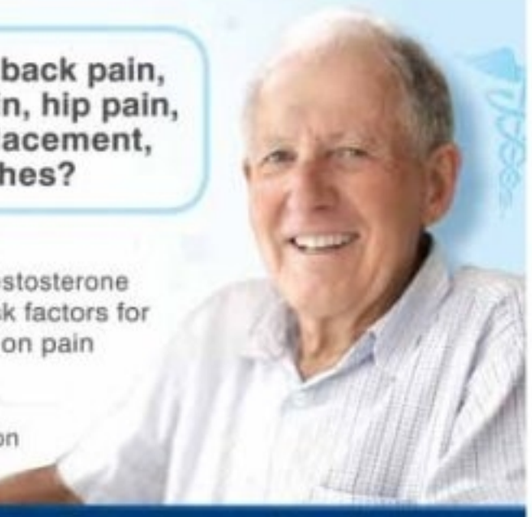

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at home with metro

Uncommon wealth for a home on this avenue

The $12.5 million sale of a historical brownstone in the Back Bay last month marks the priciest transaction in Boston so far this year

Though the property at 15 Commonwealth Ave. was most recently used as office space by the Boston Psychoanalytic Society, the new owners are planning to restore it to its original purpose — a decadent single-family home.

"The owners are from Boston and they wanted a unique piece of property. This is the most sought after block in Back Bay," says Lili Banani, of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, the broker who represented the buyer. "The details in the home date back to the late 1800s."

Those details include intricate carved wood paneling and ornate marble fireplaces. The house boasts five floors, 13 parking spaces and 15,000 square feet of living space. The element that really sets it apart from surrounding homes on Commonwealth Avenue, according to Banani, is the size of the building. At 50 feet wide, it appears to be a double residence with two large bays and 14 windows facing the street.

The renovation project is expected to take three years, according to Banani.

Historical facts

- Built in 1867
- Once owned by famed entrepreneur and railroad investor Oliver Ames
- Converted to a school in 1946

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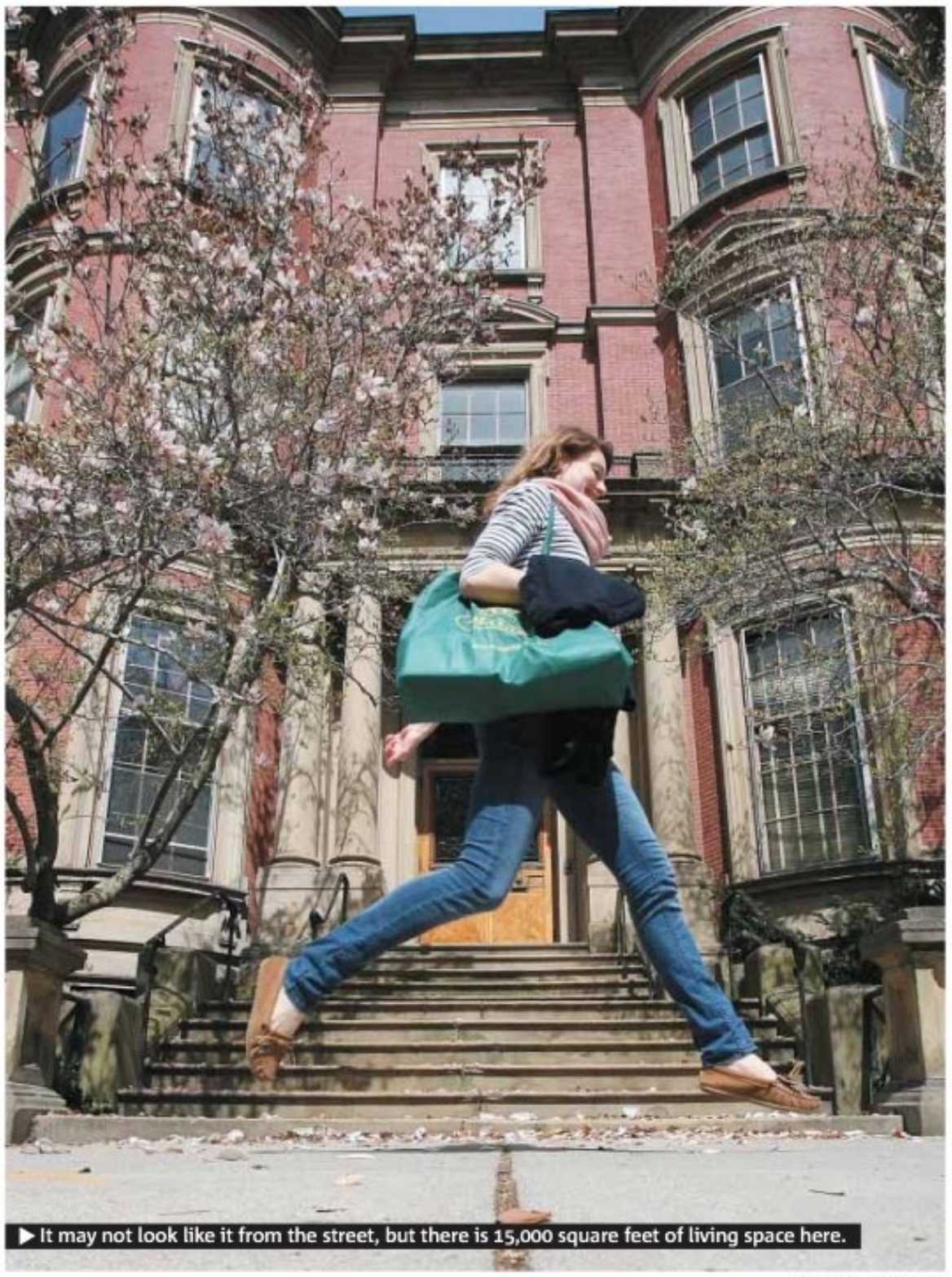

▶ It may not look like it from the street, but there is 15,000 square feet of living space here.

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

Get packing

Top 5 vacation home markets

1. **Aspen, Colo.** Median list price: $1,725,000
2. **The Hamptons, N.Y.** Median list price: $2,100,000
3. **Hilton Head, S.C.** Median list price: $475,000
4. **Santa Barbara, Calif.** Median list price: $799,000
5. **Avalon, N.J.** Median list price: $1,350,000

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▶ Matching hangers are happy hangers.

CLOSET THERAPY

Getting dressed is about to get easier

Melanie Fascitelli, founder of closet design firm Clos-ette and author of 'Shop Your Closet,' shows us how to organize our clothes

Edit your wardrobe: "The first thing you need to do is get yourself a partner, someone you trust, to help you edit," says Fascitelli. "This person is someone who is going to tell you the truth, whose style you admire and who has a good eye for your own personal style. Editing or culling your wardrobe is not only about finding things that you haven't worn in one or two years but also asking, 'Would I buy this today?'"

Color code: Sort your clothes by color and type. Keep pants with pants and skirts with skirts, and then organize each category from light to dark, says Fascitelli. "This is a visual merchandising trick that makes your eye follow the color. It's easier to get to your stuff this way."

It's all about the hangers: "The least expensive thing you can do to get your closet organized and cleaned up is to buy all the same style and color hanger," says Fascitelli, who prefers using a neutral color. For her product line, Clos-ette Too, she says they spent years developing the perfect hanger. "It's a skinny, soft hanger in five different styles for all different types of garments," she says of the end product. "And they have very short drops, so you're not just saving on horizontal space but vertical [too]."

To fold or to hang?: The general rule is "hang everything you can," says Fascitelli. If you don't have too much space on your closet rod, the items she specifically feels should be hung are coats, pants, dresses, suits, tailored shirts, silk blouses and gowns. The best items to fold and store on a shelf or in a drawer are T-shirts, sweaters, gym clothes, jeans and delicates — such as beaded and cashmere pieces.

Reuse and recycle

Once you figure out what you're keeping and what's going, find a consignment store.

"It's green — you're recycling your clothing," says Fascitelli, who likes I-Ella or Linda's Stuff on eBay. She also suggests giving directly to a charity such as Dress for Success.

Keepsake items

Saving your prom dress for your daughter? Have a separate storage area for archival items, says Fascitelli. Wrap them in acid-free tissue and store them in an acid-free box.

TINA CHADHA
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Must-haves

▶ Fascitelli recommends directional LED lighting or battery-powered bright lights for a well-lit closet.

Three closet lifesavers

1 **Archipelago Botanicals Lavender Fragrance Sachet, $13,** www.archipelago-usa.com

2 **Archival Garment Storage Box, $35,** www.containerstore.com

3 **Jo Malone London Limited Edition Scent Surround Drawer Liners, $45,** www.jomalone.com

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Last year	5.08	4.27	3.87

Source: Bankrate.com, for more information visit www.bankrate.com. Bankrate national averages are based on 100 largest institutions in the top 10 markets in the United States.

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MEDICAID – THE 5 YEAR LOOKBACK RULE

By Attorney George Warshaw

Last in a Medicaid series

I've never met anyone who would rather give his or her money to the government than leave it for one's children, heirs or charity. The government never has as well.

To combat the natural inclination of giving away one's money and property to qualify for free nursing home care, Medicaid, like in hockey, has a penalty box.

If you impermissibly give away your assets in Medicaid's eyes, the whistle blows, you are disqualified from further play and placed in the penalty box.

The penalty? Medicaid takes the value of your gift and divides it by the average monthly cost of nursing home care. The result is the number of months you must sit in the penalty box before you can apply again.

There is a safe harbor though, as lawyers like to say, where you can permissibly make a gift and avoid the penalty box: make that gift more than **5 years** before you apply for Medicaid and your gift is usually safe.

Your gift is then no longer a countable asset on the government's list of assets that you must sell and spend before you can qualify for care.

Be careful! Always consult an Elder Care Attorney for your particular Medicaid situation. © 2012 George Warshaw.

Read the Medicaid series at www.GeorgeintheMetro.com.

GWA

George Warshaw is a real estate and estate planning attorney in Massachusetts. He represents buyers and sellers of homes and condos in Massachusetts, and prepares wills, trusts for individuals and families. George welcomes new clients and questions at metro@warshawlaw.com.

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